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File

TRAV 9-1

17 July 1956

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Director, Research and Reports

THROUGH: Chief, Geographic Research

THROUGH: Chief, Geography Division

SUBJECT: Transmittal of Area Familiarization Trip Report for  
[REDACTED]

REFERENCE: DD/I Notice No. 22-100-5 dated 26 March 1956

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1. Attached, for onward transmittal to the DD/I, is the trip report covering area familiarization travel by [REDACTED] in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Far East during the period 10 March - 10 June 1956.

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2. In attempting to comply with the provisions of paragraph 6 of the reference DD/I notice and to pattern our report somewhat after the model of that of [REDACTED] as suggested by DD/I memorandum dated 14 June 1956 we have had some definite misgivings concerning the value of attempting to record "in detail the substantive benefits which accrued" from such a trip.

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3. We conceived of the trip, not as a detailed fact-finding mission but as an opportunity, through first-hand observation, to achieve a better realization of the living contexts in which the facts that we work with have significance and of the relative power of various geographic factors from place to place. Neither of us had travelled in Asia before; our knowledge and impressions of the area had been gained through academic study and headquarters work assignments. There is no doubt on our part that the substantive benefits to us were great; there is equally no doubt that these benefits cannot be crystallized in a single trip report, no matter how elaborate and polished it might be. Rather, we feel that the benefits will become apparent -- and the trip will be justified -- by our increased competence in the day-to-day working situation.

4. The reporting of substantive details on foreign areas is properly a responsibility of Foreign Service personnel and Service Attaches. Washington headquarters personnel can acquire facts about

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a foreign area by remaining in Washington and reading the vast flow of source materials that crosses their desk. The area familiarization trip, we feel, should be considered an orientation device to enable headquarters analysts to evaluate more realistically the substantive reports coming from the field.

5. We feel that it is inappropriate to base the justification for any given area familiarization trip on the ex post facto submission of a trip report. It should be presumed that the normal pre-trip processes of justification and selection of personnel to be sent on such travel represent the carefully considered judgment of the authorizing officials.

6. We offer these observations in the sincere belief that it is impractical to require that trip reports for area familiarization travel "should include in detail the substantive benefits which accrued to the traveler during the trip." A considerable amount of time must be spent, and a feeling of frustration must be experienced by the returning traveler who conscientiously tries to comply with the existing directives.

7. We recommend, for your consideration and for such action as you deem appropriate, that the substantive section of future area familiarization trip reports be limited to a brief statement of the activities and findings of the officer performing the travel, leaving it to his discretion to report only such substantive highlights as he considers to be of significance to higher echelons.

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## Enclosure:

Trip Report (10 copies)

- 2 - DD/I
- 2 - FCS/DD/I
- 2 - St/I/RR
- 1 - St/A/RR
- 3 - Ch/G/RE

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